



FIRST FRIDAY PRAYER

MEDITATION & CALENDAR

March 2018

*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.
Romans 12:12 ESV*

First Friday - March 2

We urge you to set aside the first Friday, March 2nd, as a day to pray and fast for our diocese (ANiC), the Anglican Church of North America, and the Anglican Communion worldwide. We live in an age of immense pressure against the Gospel. It is critical that we unite together in prayer.

Notable Prayer Quotes

“What right have I to speak to God? There is only one answer. My only right to speak to God is that Christ has borne my punishment and has reconciled me to God and has made peace with God.”

– Martyn Lloyd Jones (1899 - 1981)

Do I Really Deserve to Ask God for Anything?

And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. - Hebrews 10: 19 NLT

During the course of my ministry, I have been involved in encouraging the practice of individual and corporate prayer in a variety of ways, and I am frequently asked questions concerning prayer. Some of them come out of a false understanding of what God is like. For instance; “How can you bother God with such a trivial thing as helping you find your lost car keys? After all, He has all the stars and planets to keep in their place, and serious conflicts and wars to resolve, and then there's climate change and ocean pollution, and”

Well, you get the picture. Typically, this is not an insincere question, but the questioner has a vastly incomplete understanding of the omnipotent and omnipresent nature of God. J.B. Phillips once expressed this right in the title of a book he wrote published in 1955. He declared, “Your God Is Too Small”. In some cases, way too small. We need the biblical paradigm of who our God really is!

Most frequently, though, the questions come out of a heart that's feeling inadequate, unworthy, disqualified. “I know I'm supposed to pray as a Christian. I know I'm supposed to want to pray. I feel really guilty when I don't pray as much as I should. How much is enough anyway? I'm still such a mess. Do I really deserve to ask God for anything?”

Well, the apparent answer would seem to be “No”. Before we come to Christ, all we “deserve” is death. We are not entitled to anything other than eternal separation from God. That’s the bad news!

But the good news of the Gospel is radically different – far more radical than many Christians seem to realize! As we seek to approach the Father in prayer, all the while feeling inadequate and unwor-

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thy, we need to ask ourselves one fundamental, yet life-altering question – Whom am I going to believe? Am I going to believe what the Accuser of the Brethren says about me? Am I going to believe my own, subjective, erratic appraisal of my condition? Or, am I going

to believe what God says about me in His Word?

The author of Hebrews paints such a vivid picture of our standing before God using the imagery of the old covenant tabernacle with its inner Most Holy Place where the presence of God dwelt in the Ark of the Covenant. Under the Mosaic law, only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place and then only once a year to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. And that’s often how we feel, isn’t it. Burdened under the weight of our own sin and in the awesome, terrifying presence of Almighty God! But read the grace-filled words of the new covenant:

And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been

sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.

Hebrews 10: 19-23 NLT

I chose the New Living Translation (NLT) here simply because of its simplicity of language and ease of understanding. Look at these liberating phrases; “we can boldly enter”, “let us go right into the presence of God”, “our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood”. Do I really believe this to be true? Can I really experience this short of heaven? How is it all possible?

It is all possible because of Christ’s finished work on the cross of Calvary. This is the Gospel! If we’re going to believe what the Word says about ourselves, rather than the alternative voices, what else does Scripture say is true about us?

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Paul’s epistle to the Romans is chock full of statements about what it means that we are now “in Christ”. In fact, one preacher that I read recently found 50 benefits of being in Christ, just in Romans 8 alone. There isn’t scope in this prayer meditation to examine all that God’s Word promises is true about us, but let me whet your appetite to pursue them on your own. Here are just a few:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8: 1 ESV)

Despite our feelings of shame and guilt, exploited by the devil and our old carnality, there is absolutely no one condemning us now that we are “in Christ”. We are safe, totally declared “not guilty” because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Believe it, Church! Believe it about yourself!

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. (Romans 6: 6 ESV)

Not only have our sins been washed away and we stand free from judgment, our old Adamic identity have been crucified with Jesus, nailed to the cross with Him, in order that we should no longer be enslaved to the power of sin. Paul goes on to explain his rationale for this in verse 7 where he says, “For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.” How liberating! How game changing! What a radical paradigm shift! Believe it, Church! Believe it about yourself!

Here’s one from 2 Corinthians:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV)

Everything about who we are, now that we are “in Christ”, has changed. Praise God, the old is gone for good, and the “new” has come. Imagine it as if your entire spiritual identity, your spiritual DNA, has been transformed. No longer defined by your sin patterns. Believe it, Church! Believe it about yourself!

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I’d so love to look at many more of these life-changing statements that God’s Word makes about who we are in Christ, but for the moment, let me close with this thought.

As you take time this Lent, to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you things in your life that He’d like to change, please consider that maybe He’s convicting us of believing the wrong voices about who we are, putting our faith in the wrong narratives that tells us a story contrary to what God says is true of us, contrary to the Gospel.

To answer our original question, “Do I really deserve to ask God for anything?”, I truly hope and pray that we can answer that question, “Yes, absolutely! Not through anything that I have done to earn such worthiness, but because of what Jesus has done for me, I can come boldly into the Father’s presence, muddy boots and all, without terror or shame. Jesus has done it all! It is finished!”

Canon Garth V. Hunt

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Prayer Calendar | March 2018

Praise items and prayer requests coming from within ANiC, ACNA and the Anglican Communion for each day of this month.

- 1. Our diocese** – Pray for the Anglican Network in Canada and all our parishes across Canada and in New England.
Also **Vancouver Island Deanery is hosting a 24 hour prayer vigil for the health of Bishop Trevor Walters 8am March 1st to 8am March 2nd and invites the whole diocese to join in prayer.**
- 2. Our province and primate** – Pray for Archbishop Foley Beach (& Allison). May God glorify Himself through the ACNA and give us a passion for sharing the Gospel.
3. Pray for **Bishop Charlie Masters (& Judy)** as he leads ANiC. May God grant him the health, strength, discernment and the passion he needs for this heavy responsibility.
- 4. ANiC's 5 Ministry Priorities** – Pray that God will use these five priorities to transform us and our parishes: Bold witnesses; Biblically grounded; Loving children; On mission; and Planting churches.
5. Pray for ANiC's suffragan bishops: **Bishops Stephen Leung (& Nona) and Trevor Walters (& Dede)**. Pray for health, wisdom and vision as they care for clergy and churches. Pray especially for Bishop Trevor as he undergoes cancer treatment.
- 6. Bishop Don Harvey (& Trudy)** – Pray for Bishop Don in his roles as ANiC's episcopal vicar and as senior chaplain to the ACNA College of Bishops.
7. Pray for **Bishop Ron Ferris (and Jan)** as he embraces his important new role as Assisting Bishop for Missionary Planning. Bishop Ron will seek to integrate new ministry possibilities and partnerships for our future. Pray also for our retired bishop, **Bishop Malcolm Harding (& Marylou)**. Thank God for their fruitful ministries.
8. Pray for the new **Missionary Bishop Andy Lines (& Mandy)**, who was consecrated at the ACNA Assembly on the 30th June, 2017. Given the spiritual drift from orthodoxy of the Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church, his ministry to orthodox evangelicals will be vital.
- 9. ANiC council, chancellor & registrar** – Pray for wisdom and servant hearts as they serve ANiC. May they know God's leading, seek His will, and experience His joy.
- 10. ANiC staff & volunteers** – Pray for strength for the tasks, faithfulness in service, & joy in the Lord. May God's blessing rest on ANiC as we seek to know, love & serve Him.
- 11. Asian & Multicultural Ministries in Canada (AMMiC)** – May God bless this ministry as it reaches ethnic communities & new immigrants with the Gospel, and plants new churches.
- 12. ANiC archdeacons, canons & all clergy** – Pray for spiritual and physical protection and renewal as well as for God's blessing on them, their spouses & families. **Please pray especially for our Archdeacons as they meet with Bishop Charlie today in Vancouver.** (Archdeacons: Paul Charbonneau, Ron Corcoran, Darrell Critch, Paul Crossland, Dan Gifford, Terry Lamb, Michael McKinnon, Tim Parent)
- 13. Pray for the "Being Clear About the Gospel" Conference, March 13-14 in Vancouver.** The Gospel is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). It is vital for all Christians, but especially for those in positions of leadership in the local church, to be clear about what the Gospel is and what it is not.
- 14. ANiC's New England congregations**
Holy Trinity (Marlborough, MA)
St Brigid of Kildare (Medway, MA)
Holy Trinity (Attleboro, MA)
All Saints' (Rutland, VT)
Emmanuel - Chinese (Boston, MA)
15. Please pray today for **ANiC Council** as they meet today and tomorrow (March 15 -16) with Bishop Charlie and the other bishops to pray and seek God's direction for ANiC's future direction and mission.
- 16. ANiC congregations in Newfoundland & the Atlantic Provinces**
St Stephen the Martyr (St John's, NL)
Resurrection (Halifax, NS)
Good Samaritan (St John's, NL)
Christ the King (Quispamsis, NB)
- 17. ANiC congregations in Quebec**
St Timothy's (Montreal area)
St James (Lennoxville)
Emmaus (Westmount, Montreal)

18. ANiC congregations in the Ottawa, Ontario area

Faith (Embrun)
St Luke's (Pembroke)
Messiah (Ottawa)
Blackburn Hamlet Community (Ottawa)
St Peter & St Paul's (Ottawa)
Grace (Mississippi Mills)
Eternal Hope (Carleton Place)

19. ANiC congregations in Ontario

St Aidan's (Windsor)
St Aidan's at River's Bend (Belle River)
Cornerstone Anglican Church (Sarnia)
New Life (Sturgeon Falls)
The Way (Wasaga Beach)
The Gate (Sault Ste Marie)

20. ANiC congregations in Ontario

St Hilda's (Oakville)
St Peter by the Park (Hamilton)
St George's (Burlington)
Epiphany (Hamilton)
Good Shepherd (St Catharines)
St Jude (Guelph)

21. ANiC congregations in Greater Toronto and eastern Ontario

St Chad's (Toronto)
Celebration Church (Barrie)
Christ The King (Toronto)
New Song (Port Perry)
Bethel South Asian (Brampton)
Living Waters (Kingston)
St James Fellowship (Trenton)

22. ANiC congregations in Saskatchewan & Manitoba

Resurrection (Brandon, MB)
St Bede's (Kinosota, MB)
Redeemer (Dauphin, MB)
Cornerstone (Regina, SK)

23. ANiC congregations in Alberta

Holy Trinity - Filipino (Edmonton)
Grace Anglican (Calgary)
Christ the King (Edmonton)
Good Shepherd - Cantonese (Calgary)
Living Water (Athabasca)

24. ANiC congregations in the Fraser Valley & Interior of BC

Ascension (Langley)
Resurrection (Kelowna)
Saint Matthew's (Abbotsford)
Christ Church (Kelowna)
Church of the Holy Cross (Abbotsford)
South Okanagan Project (Oliver)

25. ANiC congregations in the Vancouver, BC area

St John's Vancouver
Sojourn Church (UBC, Vancouver)
St John's Richmond
Immanuel Church (Vancouver)
St Peter's Fireside (Vancouver)
St Andrews (Delta)

26. ANiC congregations in the Vancouver, BC area

St Matthias and St Luke (Vancouver)
Good Shepherd Richmond - Chinese
All Nations - Japanese
St John's - Sudanese (Surrey)
Good Shepherd Vancouver - Chinese
St Timothy's (North Vancouver)

27. ANiC congregations on Vancouver Island & Sunshine Coast

Open Gate Church (Victoria)
Living Edge (Victoria)
Church of Our Lord (Victoria)
Christ's Church (Oceanside)
The Table (Victoria, Saanich Peninsula)
Christ the Redeemer (Pender Harbour)

28. Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans - Pray that repentance, revival and renewal will spread throughout the Communion. Pray especially for the dedicated Primates leading this global fellowship of orthodox Anglicans determined to remain faithful to God's Word.

29. For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)** as it is partnering with the Anglican Diocese of Cameroon to provide a **full service healthcare clinic** in the city of Douala. It will offer inexpensive, quality care to people who do not have access to, or who cannot afford, health care and medications.

30. Pray for **the millions of refugees and internally displaced people worldwide**. Pray for persecuted Christians, especially in Muslim, communist and war-torn lands.

31. Pray for **a fresh outpouring of repentance and revival upon our nations and our world!** "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence - as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil - to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence!" Isaiah 64:1-2 ESV